

The Status Report

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March is Women's History Month

March is **National Women's History Month** and for 31 days we have the opportunity to reflect, appreciate, be inspired, appraise how far we've come..... and assess how much further we need to go. The month is highlighted by **International Women's Day** on March 8 and tomorrow we will join a coalition of our sister organizations to celebrate "*Women's Economic Self Sufficiency: Globally and Locally*" at Simmons College. Nearly 200 people are expected to hear an esteemed panel of experts. Join us.

Since 1987, March has been designated as National Women's History Month to ensure that the history of American women will be recognized and celebrated in schools, workplaces, and communities throughout the country. It came to be because as recently as the 1970's, women's history was virtually an unknown topic in the K-12 curriculum or in general public consciousness. To address this situation, the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration for 1978. The week of March 8 was chosen to make International Women's Day the focal point of the observance. The popularity of this event spread and in 1987, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Since then, the National Women's History Month Resolution has been approved with bipartisan support in both the House and Senate.

Each year the resolution notes:

- American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of our Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways;
- American women have played and continue to play a critical economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of the life of the Nation by constituting a significant portion of the labor force working inside and outside of the home;
- American women have played a unique role throughout the history of the Nation by providing the majority of the volunteer labor force of the Nation;
- American women of every race, class, and ethnic background served as early leaders in the forefront of every major progressive social change movement;
- American women have been leaders, not only in securing their own rights of suffrage and equal opportunity, but also in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights movement, and other movements, especially the peace movement, which create a more fair and just society for all; and
- Despite these contributions, the role of American women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued, in the literature, teaching and study of American history.

If we don't promote women's history, who will?

This is OUR month.....claim it. Women's organizations across the Commonwealth are commemorating Women's History Month through various educational, social and networking events. We have listed several of these events throughout this newsletter and on our website. We encourage you to visit your favorite women's organization's website today and attend one of their events this month. Celebrate.....Enjoy.....and Commit to making new history for the women of Massachusetts!

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Proud Member of the



Executive Director's Corner

March is National Women's History Month. Test your knowledge:

1. *What woman was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for holding religious discussion meetings in her home?*
2. *What leading suffragist was arrested and convicted of attempting to vote in the 1872 election?*
3. *Who was the first woman to run for President of the United States (in 1872)?*
4. *Who wrote the first version of the Equal Rights Amendment, in 1923?*
5. *Who was the first Black woman elected to Congress?*
6. *What woman was turned down by 29 medical schools before being accepted as a student, graduated at the head of her class, and became the first licensed woman doctor in the U.S.?*
7. *Who is the first female President of the Massachusetts State Senate?*

This month, devoted to the acknowledgement and celebration of women's many accomplishments, breakthroughs and achievements, is an important time to take stock. To remember and revere the commitment, passion and perseverance of those who came before us and broke the barriers which make it easier for women today. But to also think about what more women's history needs to be made, and what the role of each and every one of us is in making this happen.

For this month, I share with you the excellent suggestions offered by Jan Shubert, Director of the Babson College Center for Women's Leadership, in her most recent newsletter:

- Make time for **remembering** (and honoring) all the amazing women who have gone before us, who made history—or “her-story,” if you prefer—in amazing and inspiring ways.
- Make time for **recognizing** the wonderful women who are creating history now. You don't need to go to a Web site to find them. Just look around you. You'll find them in your workplace, in your schools, on the playing fields, in your communities, on the stage, in the news, and, occasionally, gathered around your dining room table. This is the month for saying “Well done,” and the month for asking, “How can I help?”
- Make time for **reaching out** to make sure that the next links in the chain of women's history are strong and solidly connected. Find, encourage, challenge, and support the young women who are going to make history in ways that we can't even imagine. And don't ignore this opportunity to reach out to young men, too. Women are a powerful part of their history.

And lastly, I invite you to join the MCSW and Senator Sue Tucker on March 24 when we will host a “return” to the State House of Sarah and Angelina Grimke, the first women in U.S. history to speak to a legislative body – the 1837 Massachusetts state legislature. American abolitionists and social activists, the Grimké sisters, daughters of a South Carolina slave-holding family, helped pioneer the antislavery and women's rights movements in the United States. In spite of growing up in a male-dominated, slave-holding southern family, the two shared the belief that all people are created equal. Financing the trip themselves, the sisters visited sixty-seven cities to speak against slavery, breaking new ground for women as public speakers. Up to this time, it was virtually unheard of for women to address audiences with both men and women in attendance and even fewer were so outspoken on the most controversial issues of the day. While they received praise from many for their courageous stand against slavery, the sisters also suffered countless attacks on their character. We are sure this performance by Lani Peterson and Susan Leone will be highly entertaining and informative. Check out our web site or call the MCSW for more details as they become available.



ANSWERS: 1. Anne Hutchinson, 2. Susan B. Anthony, 3. Victoria Woodhull, 4. Alice Paul, 5. Shirley Chisholm, 6. Elizabeth Blackwell, 7. Therese Murray

MCSW to Hold Western MA Public Hearing on Women's Issues March 26th



The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women will host a public hearing on issues concerning women on March 26th at 7:00 p.m. at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The MCSW invites all who are interested to attend the public hearing and encourages participants to submit verbal or written testimony. The testimony collected will inform the work of the Commission and be reported to the Commission's appointing authorities (the Governor, Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Caucus of Women Legislators) and state legislators.

The hearing will be hosted by the college's Everywoman's Center, a diverse campus-based women's center which provides leadership in promoting educational access and equity for women, empowers women to take full control of their lives and strengthens connections among women. The center hosts a variety of programs to meet the needs of the diverse populations of the university and neighboring communities. EWC works to stop all forms of oppression, particularly those based on gender, age, class, ethnicity, race, mental and physical ability, sexual orientation and spiritual belief.

If you are interested in attending the public hearing, plan to present testimony or have any questions, please contact the MCSW at 617-626-6520 or mcsw@state.ma.us. For more information, visit the Commission website at <http://www.mass.gov/women>.

MCSW Seeks Applications for Mid County Vacancy on Berkshire CSW

Applications are now being accepted to fill a mid county vacancy on the Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women (BCCSW). The Commission, which is comprised of nine members drawn from throughout Berkshire County, exists to provide a positive and effective voice for women and girls within the county.

The MCSW, which is the BCCSW's appointing authority, welcomes all interested and qualified women to apply, and particularly encourages interest from women of color and mid county residents. Applications are available on the MCSW's website at www.mass.gov/women or may be requested by calling 617-626-6520. Questions about these opportunities should be directed to the MCSW office at 617-626-6520 or mcsw@state.ma.us. **The deadline for applications is March 21, 2008.**

The Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women was legislatively created in 2004, to consist of nine commissioners who were charged with becoming expert on the status of women in Berkshire County. Specifically they inform themselves with existing data, collect data of their own, and discuss possible solutions to issues faced by women living in Berkshire County.

"We are proud of the strides that the BCCSW has made in its short history. They are engaged in meaningful work and have built excellent relationships and coalitions to address key issues, such as their current emphasis on teen pregnancy prevention," said Linda Brantley, MCSW Executive Director. "We look forward to identifying mid county representatives who will bring new passion, energy and initiative to the Commission and augment its current makeup and skill sets."



SAVE THE DATE!

Join the MCSW & Senator Susan Tucker
Monday, March 24th • 1:00 p.m.
Nurses Hall • Massachusetts State House

Grimke Sisters "Return" to the State House
First women in U.S. history to address a legislative body.

Co-Sponsors of this event (to date) include:
American Association of University Women-Massachusetts,
The Crittenton Women's Union, Teen Voices, YWCAs of MA

For more details contact the MCSW at mcsw@state.ma.us or 617-626-6520.

MCSW on Beacon Hill



March 4th was a busy day under the golden dome and the MCSW was pleased to provide oral and written testimony on behalf of three bills endorsed by the full Commission.

More than 300 people gathered at the State House to participate in a hearing held by the State's Joint Committee on the Judiciary, which lasted over 10 hours. Standing with the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition's Partners, more than 65 diverse organizations, the MCSW offered verbal testimony in support of *An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes*.

In addition the Commission submitted testimony written testimony in support of *An Act to Protect and Enhance the Rights of Child and Adult Victims and Witnesses of Crime* and *An Act to Prevent Harassment*.

An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes (H1722) clarifies and updates Massachusetts' non-discrimination laws to ensure that they clearly and uniformly protect all people regardless of their gender identity or expression. This bill adds the categories of gender identity and expression to MA hate crime laws as well as to the employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and education non-discrimination laws.

An Act to Protect and Enhance the Rights of Child and Adult Victims and Witnesses of Crime (S802) was filed to more comprehensively address the needs, rights and safety of child and adult victims or witnesses of crimes. The bill would add new rights to the Massachusetts *Victim Bill of Rights*, (originally signed into law in 1984 and amended in 1995), as well as clarifying, revising and, updating the language of the law. If passed the legislation will reinstate Massachusetts as a leader in the victim's rights movement.

An Act to Prevent Harassment (S1002) would establish a criminally enforceable Harassment Protection Order by extending restraining order protections to victims who may not have a relationship with their abuser or stalker.

The MCSW also assisted the MA Paid Sick Day Coalition with the delivery of an apple-gram to each of the state legislator's offices on Wednesday, March 5. The apple carried the message that workers in the Commonwealth need and deserve paid sick days when they or their family members are ill. Legislators were asked to support **The Paid Sick Days bill (House 1803/ Senate 1073)**.

For more information about any of the bills listed above, please contact Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6520 or Jill.Ashton@state.ma.us.

Worcester County Women in Politics to be Featured at WC Regional Council

An esteemed panel of Worcester County women in politics will be featured by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women when its Worcester Regional Council meets on April 3. Panelists, ranging from school committee and city councilors to mayors and state legislators will showcase the pathways to women's political engagement and discuss personal experiences and perspectives of being a female elected official. Confirmed speakers include Senator Harriette Chandler, Representative Jennifer Flanagan, Mayors Konstantina Lukes of Worcester, and Lisa Wong of Fitchburg, and Diane McCutcheon, chair of the Millville Board of Selectmen.

This will be the fourth meeting of the Worcester Regional Council, a group of approximately 30 women leaders from diverse professions and areas of expertise who meet quarterly to discuss and inform the Commission about issues important to women in Worcester County.

The program will be held on Thursday, April 3rd from 5:30-7 p.m. in Sterling. Any interested Worcester County woman leader is invited to attend. To RSVP or for additional information please contact Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at Jill.Ashton@state.ma.us or 617-626-6525.



Top L-R: Commissioner Angela Menino, Commissioner Donna Finneran, Chair Marianne Fleckner, Commissioner Elizabeth Houlihan, Commissioner Linda Cavaoli, Vice Chair Susana Segat, Commissioner Emerita Northampton Mayor Clare Higgins, Commissioner Emerita Sandy Jesse, Commissioner Emerita Mary Reardon Johnson, Commissioner Pam Malumphy.

Bottom L-R: Commissioner Emerita Rose-anna Means, Commissioner Emerita Beth Boland, Commissioner Deborah DiMasi, Commissioner Jacqueline Lane.

MCSW Initiates Commissioner Emerita Program

To strengthen the bond and connections between the MCSW and former Commissioners, the MCSW has created a Commissioner Emerita program. The initiative was launched at a reception following the MCSW's January full Commission meeting, and was hosted by charter Commissioner Angela Menino at The Parkman House. The initial meeting was attended by five former Commissioners, while other interested former Commissioners plan to attend future activities. The meeting included group introductions, shared memories, and a discussion regarding the status of women's political participation. The Commissioner Emerita program will strive to better inform and engage former Commissioners and encourage them to be involved as they are able in the ongoing work of the Commission.

Corporate Sponsors Needed for Unsung Heroines Initiative

While the selection of those to be honored at the 5th Annual Unsung Heroines Awards ceremony on May 14 is being finalized, efforts are now shifting to securing corporate sponsors to fund the celebration. Sponsorship levels range from \$150 all the way to \$10,000 with benefits including (but not limited to) advertising space in an event day program book, logo and link on our website, and listings in the hundreds of press releases distributed in the months leading up to the event. We hope that you will consider contributing to making this event a truly special and memorable one for our very deserving honorees.

Sponsorship forms are available for download on our website at www.mass.gov/women. We encourage you to pledge your sponsorship early to enjoy the full benefits of your support.

There are also advertising opportunities available in the program book that will be developed. This beautiful publication is a lasting and treasured memento for our honorees and their families and is a great way to gain visibility for your business or organization or to join us in congratulating these special women for their many good deeds.

Please contact Program Coordinator Kim Sebastiao at Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us or 617-626-6521 with any questions.

Women Wanted to Take the Fire-fighter Municipal Service Exam

Ladies—are you seeking an exciting, challenging well paying job with a flexible schedule? Consider becoming a firefighter!

Fire departments across the state are interested in attracting female members to their forces and are making special efforts to encourage women to take the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Firefighter Municipal Service Written Examination on Saturday, April 26th.

With the current status of the wage gap, it is particularly important for women to consider professions in non-traditional fields, such as police and fire, where the starting salary is often higher than in traditional fields.

"We are excited to help inform and encourage women to apply for these jobs as the starting salaries provide very good wages and benefits so that women can be economically self sufficient," said Marianne Fleckner, Chair of the MCSW. "And while there is a physical component to the job, it is based on fitness as much as physical strength so women should not be deterred because they feel they aren't strong enough."

Study guides for the test along with a physical preparation guide are available on the HRD web site. Deadline for applications is March 18th. To apply online visit www.mass.gov/civilservice. For further information please contact the Human Resources Division at 617-878-9895.

Take Action. Get Educated. Get Involved.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the movement to advance women in the Commonwealth you can start by attending any one of the number of events and meetings taking place across the state in the coming weeks.

Thursday, March 6 (6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.): Women Who Launch: The Journey of Brookline Female Entrepreneurs

Location: Newbury College

Details: Hosted by the Brookline Commission on Women, this free event is a networking opportunity paired with a panel discussion and keynote address. The keynote address will be delivered by Ginny Wilmerding, author of *Smart Women and Small Business: How to Make the Leap from Corporate Careers to the Right Small Enterprise*. The panel discussion will be moderated by Hsiu-Lan Chang of Fast Frame of Brookline.. For more information please contact the Brookline Commission for Women at bcw@town.brookline.ma.us.



Friday, March 7 (7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.): International Women's Day Breakfast

Location: Simmons College Linda K. Paresky Conference Center (300 The Fenway, Boston)

Details: The topic for this year's IWD Breakfast is Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency: Globally & Locally. Speakers include Elisabeth Babcock, President and CEO, Crittenton Women's Union; Carole Biewener, Professor of Economics & Women's Studies, Simmons College; and Johanna Chao Kreilick, Manager of the Economic Justice Program, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. A suggested donation of \$5.00 includes a continental breakfast. Please RSVP by March 4 to diane.hammer@simmons.edu.

Tuesday, March 11 (5:30 p.m.): UMASS Boston's Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy's International Women's Day, Women's History Month, and the Center's 25th Women's Research Forum

Location: UMASS Boston—Campus Center Ballroom (Boston)

Details: A special event honoring the 11 women serving as mayors from across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The panel discussion will be moderated by NECN's Alison King. Cosponsors include the Office of the Chancellor (who will open the program), the Institute for Asian American Studies, the Department of Women's Studies, the Department of Political Science, and the Joiner Center. Please RSVP at the following website: <http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.cgi?p=U28S49Z6C34J>.

Wednesday, March 13 (4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.): Professional Development Series for Advocates

Location: Norfolk County (See Details for more information.)

Details: This is the first of an eight-week series meant for advocates (direct service providers, clinicians, etc.) with a personal history of trauma or abuse. This series will give you the opportunity to meet with other advocates in a confidential, small group setting to discuss how your own history of trauma or abuse informs your work; share ideas about complex work situations; and learn ways to take care of yourself and be more effective in your work. To register, or for more information, please contact Katherine Manners at (617) 667-8239 or kmanners@bidmc.harvard.edu. (All inquiries are confidential.)

Friday, March 14 (8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.): Feel Safe Again, Inc. & MA State Police 1st Annual Stalking Conference and 4th Annual Benefit Dinner

Location: Devens Common Center (31 Andrews Parkway, Devens)

Details: This training event is recommended for victim service providers, law enforcement professionals, fire and rescue professionals, emergency medical technicians, attorneys, judges, legislators, mental health professionals, youth counselors, and others involved in supporting victims of crime, as well as victims and survivors of stalking. For more information please visit www.feelsafeagain.org/conference.html.

Tuesday, March 18 (3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.): Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality Meeting

Location: Charles F. Hurley Building, Directors Conference Room 3rd Floor (19 Staniford Street, Boston)

Details: Members of the MA Coalition for Women's Wage Equality will meet to discuss next steps in passing wage equity-related legislation, Equal Pay Day and hosting pay equity events. Anyone interested in joining this growing Coalition should contact MCSW Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6525 or jill.ashton@state.ma.us.

Do you have an event you would like to see on this list in an upcoming issue of The Status Report? E-mail the details to Program Coordinator Kim Sebastiao at Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us and we will do our best to include your event in our next issue.

Commission Officers & Members

Ruth Bramson, Dover
Azell Murphy Cavaan, Springfield
Linda Cavaoli, Worcester
Lianne Cook, Salem
Helen Corbett, Middleton
Deborah DiMasi, Boston
Erika Ebbel, Cambridge
Donna Finneran, Mattapan
Marianne Fleckner, Chair, Westford
Catherine Greene, Esq., Secretary, Brighton
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Jacqueline Lane, Sagamore
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Susana Segat, Vice Chair, Cambridge
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**Do you have questions or comments about this
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